

As affording some idea of the extreme delicacy of the operations requisite to carry into effect these improvements, I need merely refer to one or two circumstances connected with its progress to prove that even in a constructive point of view its difficulties were of no slight character. I more especially allude to the entire removal of two immense stone piers, which had at some former time been built in the water-way of the sewer, and which piers supported certain parts of the heavy and lofty walls of the houses in Grafton-street, St. George's. These piers, one measuring 53 feet in length, the other of a more square form, divided the water-way into two channels, and were considered formerly advantageous to the property lower down the line of sewer, by penning back the torrent in times of storms. The work of taking out these obstructions, as also removing two great projections, and putting in a new bottom throughout the whole length of the sewer (which here ran under buildings), between Hay-hill and Bruton-street, in length 550 feet, at a greatly reduced depth, was noiselessly, unaided by any one other than the workmen employed, and even without the knowledge of the inhabitants of the houses above, wholly performed from within the sewer.

Another operation of scarcely less nicety was to pass the sewer, which was 8 feet wide in the clear, with side walls two bricks thick, at a depth of 22 feet and upwards, beneath White Hart-street, Piccadilly, a street only 20 feet wide, and again carrying the same sewer through Sun-court, Curzon-street, which is in width less than the external dimensions of the sewer itself; and further on, the sewer winds its course under and close to buildings of great magnitude nearly the whole way from the end of Berkeley-square to Oxford-street, in most instances at depths of from 10 to 12 feet below their foundations. These instances will suffice; but I may, in concluding this notice, perhaps venture to make the remark, that whether we consider the importance, the magnitude, or the beneficial results of the works carried out in this portion of the Westminster Commission, the King's Scholars' Pond sewer may justly be entitled one of the most magnificent and extensive in the structural sewerage of a great city, executed in this or any other age.

#### FREEMASONS OF THE CHURCH.

Fza. 11.—The Rev. G. Pocock, LL.B., in the chair.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. Mr. Thomas Halifax was elected treasurer, and the Right Hon. the Earl of Cadogan was unanimously elected one of the vice-presidents.

Professor Cull moved that a testimonial detailing the services rendered to architecture by the late A. Bartholomew, Esq., F.S.A., be emblazoned on vellum, and framed and glazed, to hang in the council room of the college; and that a duplicate copy of the same similarly emblazoned, framed, and glazed, be presented to the founder's widow.

Mr. J. W. Archer delivered a preliminary discourse on ancient monuments. The lecturer stated his reasons for prefacing the subject of monuments by a general discourse on ancient monuments, as he found the two in all cases intimately connected with the other. He alluded to the perfection of the earliest existing brasses as something different from other early conditions of art.

After going into some speculations on the source of this branch of art, he proceeded to describe the knowledge of the Saxons in the art of working in British metals, the analogy between some Saxon remains of goldsmiths' work, and the transition of the early engraver from the occupations of goldsmith and chaser.

He distinguished between certain factitious Saxon monuments and such as were undoubtedly genuine, and instanced many early forms of monumental decoration.

After mentioning the brasses of foreign countries, and their inferiority to those of England, he made a remarkable exception in favour of Denmark, and urged the probability of a Scandinavian origin for the art, which he illustrated by a description of the decoration of Scandinavian monuments.

#### HEALTH OF TOWNS.

At a public meeting held at Exeter Hall, on the 11th of December last, the Marquis of Normanby in the chair, an association was formed for the purpose of diffusing among the people the information obtained by recent inquiries, as to the physical and moral evils that result from the present defective sewerage, drainage, supply of water, air and light, and construction of dwelling-houses; and also for the purpose of assisting the legislature to carry into practical operation any effectual and general measures of relief, by preparing the public mind for the change.

The Committee have recently published the speeches that were made on that occasion, and will do good if they circulate copies of the report containing them as extensively as possible. As the noble chairman said at the meeting—

"The question before the public is not one merely of bricks and mortar, of ventilators and drains. His valued friend, Dr. Southwood Smith, had proved in his evidence that filth and discomfort deteriorate the moral condition; that the worst places contain the greatest criminals."

Without pretending to go through the whole of the speeches, we may allude to some observations made by speakers which escaped notice at the time. Relative to sewers, Sir R. H. Inglis said, that in Lancaster, excellently situated for drainage and sewerage, and yet most imperfectly provided with either, and where, in consequence, disease and mortality were very great, the sewers were in a square channel; a form which, if a mathematician were to sit down and calculate what would be the most unsuitable, would be selected by him; had as it is on principle, it is equally rejected by all experience. The great sewers of Rome, indeed, built two or three thousand years ago, remain—in their arched form and their solid construction—the model of all others. Yet this square shape is persisted in at Lancaster; the doctrine being laid down, he would not say by whom, when an improvement was pointed out—"No, we don't copy thought here."

Mr. B. Haues, M.P., remarked that "people rejoice when what is called a low neighbourhood is visited by a new line of street. The houses of the poor are pulled down, and doubtless, even as things are, good, great good even, is now done. Nevertheless, the people must find homes somewhere. New alleys and courts are built. Are they well lighted, or drained, or ventilated? Let any one go into the new districts, and see the provision made for them. Are any of the modern improvements introduced, such as they find essential? He thought not, or at least in a very slight degree. There are plans now forming in the district in which he lived. Plans for new streets. He gave no opinion upon the merits of any particular plan. He spoke generally, and he found no provision for dwellings for the labouring classes; or if they are provided, the last thing thought of are these sanitary provisions, instead of their being the first. If public opinion were directed to this subject, this would not be the case. Warming, and ventilating, and lighting, might, in well contrived buildings for families of the labouring classes, be very cheaply provided. He thought it even would answer as a speculation. As to the economical warming and ventilating of large buildings, he would only quote a remarkable instance, that of the New Prison at Pentonville. From 30 to 45 cubic feet of pure fresh air are made to pass into every cell in a minute. This ventilation, and a temperature ranging from 52° to 60°, is uniformly maintained during the coldest weather at an expense of less than a farthing a cell for 24 hours. Now, the construction of this prison is far from favourable for either warming or ventilating it. He was confident that houses might be so constructed as to secure these advantages at as cheap a rate.

Mr. Gralager said, that on visiting Nottingham three or four years ago, he found whole streets of wretched houses without drainage, without the means required by common decency, and without the least supply of water, which latter article could only be obtained from distant pumps, and then by a species of theft. The natural results followed: in fact, there was a constant sequence in the evidence of the surveyor and the medical men, and

wherever the former stated that the houses were badly built, were undrained, and uncleaned, the latter pointed to those exact localities as the seat of sickness and fever, recurring again and again as regularly as the seasons returned.

#### METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY.

At the last meeting of this society communications were read from Sir Robert Peel and the Earl of Lincoln, in answer to applications from the secretary relative to the long-promised Ordnance survey and map of London, and the projected encroachment upon the carriage-way of Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

On the first subject it appears that the estimated expense of a metropolitan survey having exceeded his anticipations, Sir Robert Peel had been deterred from introducing a bill for the object.

The amount of the Ordnance estimate was stated, and, from the discussion which ensued, several members of the society seemed of opinion that the expense of a comprehensive survey for public use could not well exceed that which had actually been incurred, within the last six months, in the numerous local surveys in the neighbourhood of the metropolis by railway companies. The whole of these surveys would have been unnecessary if a Ordnance map of London, with contour lines, had existed on a scale of 5 feet to the mile, and the Board of Trade would have had simple means of testing both the correctness and expediency of the various plans submitted to them for railroad lines with new termini in the metropolis.

On the subject of the projected encroachment on the carriage-way in Lincoln's-Inn Fields, for the purpose of insulating the law courts, the Earl of Lincoln had satisfactory reasons for believing that the project had been definitively abandoned.

Various drawings were laid on the table embodying the suggestions of Mr. Lister, Mr. Austin, and other gentlemen, for removing the defects of the government plan for embankment of the Thames between Westminster and Blackfriars bridges.

The government plan had been postponed, or might ultimately be given up, but it appeared possible to obviate the objections made to it, and it was determined to seek an interview with the Earl of Lincoln to submit for his consideration the improvements required.

In the course of the evening an anecdote was mentioned by the chairman which forcibly illustrates the importance to the public of late sanitary reports, in some portions of which the society have endeavoured to give effect. A legal friend had inquired of a medical practitioner, high in the profession, why the whole body of medical men in London did not, in one voice, address the legislature to make the window-dresses, and remove every evil arising from either imperfect ventilation or defective drainage. The reply was following:—

"When you gentlemen of the law petition for measures to diminish litigation, medical men may be expected as a body to agitate the removal of all causes of disease. If government were found able and willing to carry out all the recommendations of sanitary reports, it would diminish the number of livelihood of the medical profession to the extent of one-half; positively one-half."

MR. NIXON'S STATUE OF WILLIAM IV. Now that the scaffolding and hoard are removed, we will mention that the whole of the monument including the figure, is executed in Fuggitt granite, and that the total cost of £2,200. Peterhead granite would have been preferred on account of colour, but the price asked for it was so high as to prevent its adoption. The granite posts in the footway were devised by Mr. W. Johnson of Westminster, all the masonry was executed by Mr. Chas. Wick, and the iron work which surmounted the basement by Messrs. Dwyer of Oldham. We can well believe that the greatest pains have been taken by the sculptor to produce a fine statue, and that his task, a first attempt at a new material, has been difficult. The arrangement of the pedestal is original and effective.